



Meopham Players Newsletter

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FLARE PATH - John Ogden reports on a "Phenomenal Success"



The Cast

L to R (standing)

Simon Kerkham - Sergeant Miller
 Emily Stickels - Mrs Miller
 Simon Webb - Flt-Lt Graham
 Natalie Davies - Patricia Graham
 David Alexander - Corporal Jones
 John Winson - Sqn-Ldr Swanson
 Patrick Carty - Peter Kyle
 'S' Sangha - Count Skriczevinsky
 Richard Rowe - Percy
 (Sitting) Brenda Ogden - Mrs Oakes

The only member of the cast not listed above is **Steph Anderson** who was not available for the group picture. However, she was around when the *Girls Only* photograph was taken.

Meopham Players, has always been supported by one of the County's most interesting theatrical talents, Paul Doust. Paul has conducted a number of very instructive workshops for us and was last year invited to consider directing one of our productions. Happily he agreed to. The play he said he would most like to direct was by one of his favourite playwrights, Terence Rattigan. When we announced our intention to produce this play together with the date

of the auditions, we were delighted with the response, not only from our own membership, but from other actors within the County who had either worked with Paul in the past; had attended his workshops or who were just aware of his reputation and talents. From this mix, Paul was able to generate a cast of very talented actors, which resulted in a phenomenal success, as anyone who was able to get seats for our three, sell-out performances will vouch.

(Continued on Page 2)



She is on the left dressed for her part of Countess Skriczevinsky.



Model of stage & seating

(Continued from Page 1)

The cast worked perfectly in providing the right mix of tension and humour as well as the poignancy of the old love affair between the actress wife of one of the Bomber pilots and her film actor, ex-lover, who arrived unexpectedly at the commencement of the play. There were some incredibly moving and convincing performances. One such being the mental breakdown of the bomber captain, in front of his wife, following his return from a dangerous mission; and another, the pathos of the Countess, whose Polish husband's Bomber was known to have ditched in the North Sea, overjoyed at his unexpected return and tortuous description - in fractured English - of how he and his crew were able to get back to the aerodrome. Both scenes were brilliantly executed.

All the actors provided a great example of ensemble acting in displaying a very wide range of emotions in differing circumstances and reacting convincingly with each other. However, given the expertise demonstrated by the whole cast I feel it would be invidious to single out individuals for

praise as everyone played their parts brilliantly. The set was very imaginative, using the stage, a large area in front and our existing bar area and stairs very well. It provided three different levels to create a very credible lounge area in the Falcon Hotel close to a Bomber Command aerodrome in Lincolnshire and was a spectacular example of the backstage talent we have in our group. The actors, wearing and using authentic costumes and props, were able to move around the hotel very comfortably and convincingly throughout the play.

The efforts of the backstage crew should be appreciated by us all for the amount of dedicated hard work which goes on long before, during and after these productions take place. Those involved should know that the rest of us are really grateful to them for enabling our actors to produce such memorable performances.

In this regard, it is worth drawing attention to the tremendous skill and ingenuity shown by new member, Graeme Horrocks, in covering both sound and lighting, to very convincing effect. It was almost as if the

Wellington bombers were flying immediately over our heads in the Village Hall, while the control of the interior lighting during the blackout times was perfect.

Finally, the enthusiastic applause on all three nights demonstrated once again the depth of appreciation and support we get from our regular, as well as quite a number of newer, patrons for such memorable productions.

SUPPORT CREW

Director	Paul Doust
Asst Director	Maureen Gardner
Stage Manager	Anne Horrocks
Lighting/sound	Graeme Horrocks
Prompt	Sylvia Stickings
Props	Margaret Winson
Costumes	Maureen Gardner Steph Anderson
FOH	Lesley Boycott Bill Lambert & Co
Box Office	Rodney Buckland
Publicity & Programme Photographs	John Ogden John Ogden Maureen Gardner

Set construction crew

John Winson
Bill Lambert
Arthur Evers
Terry Gardner
Howard Antwiss
Cast Members



The set facing the door to the bar



Poppy Cock's

Flare Path Column

Hello Darlings,
I couldn't just tell you about what is coming without first saying what is on my mind about the immediate past. I'm talking, of course, of the "*phenomenal success*" John has so eloquently described on pages 1 and 2. Good as the article was though, I would like to add something myself 'cos that's the kind of girl I am. Anyway, what I wanted to say was how incredibly impressed I was with the whole cast. They didn't just play the parts they were given, they actually became the characters they were portraying within the time frame of the drama. In particular, I was bowled over by Natalie Davies portrayal of the bomber pilot's conflicted wife. It was just a sublime piece of acting and is something I will never forget. But before we move on from this magnificent production, I would just like to say what a terrific job Rodney did on both

setting up the on-line booking system and on developing our very informative web site. He did Players proud, as did others on the night. In particular, Lesley would like to offer her grateful thanks for the help she received with Front-of-House particularly from Pauline and Linda.

Moving on, we have a report from Lesley on this year's **Treasure Hunt**, which - if you remember-was held on Saturday 12th May:- Once again in the merry month of May, 15 intrepid explorers set out to discover the hidden secrets of Victoria (Not just the train timetables either). To say that competition was fierce was an understatement as our newest team comprised of siblings now pitted against parents. It is always amusing to see the tactics used by teams as they follow the clues, because of course we are, and should be, following the same route. Fingers pointing at windows, signs, floor-markings, etc. (which have nothing to do with anything) just to confuse the group you spotted twenty paces behind. The occasional rain showers did nothing to

dampen the spirits, in fact they provided the excuse for a "tea" break (or equivalent). Eventually we all managed to arrive at the appointed ending where answer sheets were duly marked and winners revealed. And yes the siblings did beat the parents. We ended the day wining and dining in an underground vault which we had to ourselves before boarding our coach home. Everyone appeared to be looking forward to next year already.



Someone asked me to put this in - I'm not sure who or why, but here it is if you fancy it. Briefly, it is a scathing attack on nineteenth century morality. Helene Alving is trying to keep up appearances, but the return of her son,

Oswald, forces her to face the hypocrisy of her situation. Her husband is dead, but his cruel, wayward life still haunts them. She tries to save Oswald from repeating the same mistakes. Is it too late?

Directed by Andy Taylor and written by Henrik Ibsen who for years I thought was actually Henry Gibson. Box Office number is: 01732 363849.

IMPROBABLE FICTION

Auditions were held at the June Monthly Meeting last week. Sadly though, despite Anne putting in an enormous effort to cast this challenging play, we didn't have nearly enough applicants to continue with the production, so it was decided to proceed with

an alternative. We haven't sorted out a new date for auditions yet, but we'll let you know before the next Monthly Meeting in July. **Say Who You Are** by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall is what we are looking at. It has a cast of four - we should be able to manage that.

"Then must you speak Of one that loved not wisely but too well" Yes, absolutely right - it is from Othello's final speech before he tops himself and Brenda still has two tickets left for you to ogle the gory details at The Globe on 1st September. If you are interested would you please contact her either by phone on 01474 812745, or by email on nanaogg99@gmail.com

Henry's Hut gets a makeover.

Saturday 2nd June saw a group of Players working hard to make sense of what was stored in Henry's hut. Here are some pics of the work in progress:

First, the heavy lifting.



Then the loading up and clearance of the rubbish, (for which our very grateful

thanks go to Andy Howe)

Followed by SPACE

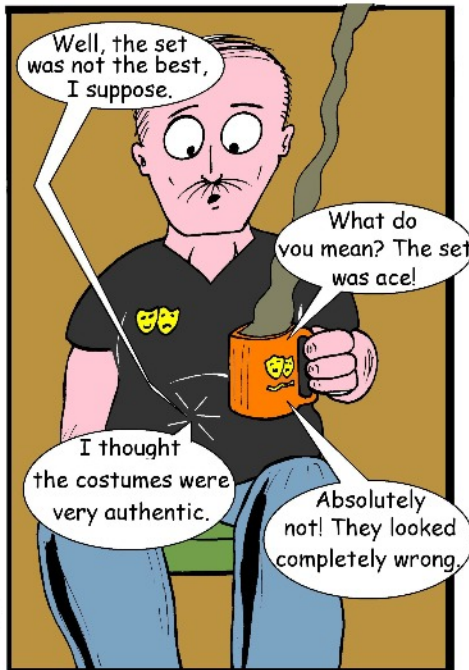


and the Barbecue



Pottham Regional Amateur Theatre Society

By Matt Dallas



By Matt Dallas 2018



Penny Pinching

Asks: Does June invoke a sense of treachery?

June, according to Oscar Hammerstein II, is busting out all over. On its own, I'm not quite sure what that means but when you hear Richard Rogers' music which goes with the words, you can be in no doubt of the onset of something joyful. The very word gives you a feeling of warmth. It makes you think of holidays in the sun and on the beach; blue lagoons and soft white sands; ice creams and small bottles of cold lager. It's all a myth of course because 'flaming' June has been known to be wet, windy and downright cold. Take 2012 for example when a record 145.3 mm of rain fell in that month over the whole of Britain, beating the previous record in 2007 by 9.1 mm. You could say that in this country there can be no certainty about the weather in any month and, to a certain extent, that is true. I mean, how many bets can have been lost when snow fails to fall on Christmas day, for example? And what are the chances we will see umbrellas up at some stage of Wimbledon in July? But the thing is none of the other months give you that same sense of treachery that June does when the sun doesn't shine. It's the start of summer, for goodness sake; surely we are entitled to some good weather and warmth, aren't we?

But just to show June isn't just beastly to the lowly, events involving the Queen seem to come in for particularly miserable attention as anyone would know who watched an extraordinarily game and rain-soaked choir singing Land of Hope and Glory on an open barge at the Thames 2012 pageant. And that was just one event, those of us old enough to remember might recall the Coronation in 1953 when cheering crowds - some of who had queued overnight - were drenched as the Queen's carriage regally passed them by. It wouldn't be so bad, perhaps, if we knew what was coming, but despite the expenditure of countless millions (billions even) on ever more powerful computers and the development of ever more exotic algorithms, we still seem to be very little better at forecasting long-term trends for June - or any other month for that matter - than we were in 1944 when such predictions were vital. People talk about the miracle of Dunkirk, but what happened to the Allied invasion force in the days leading up to D-Day was no less miraculous. Plans had, of course, to be made many months in advance. They were governed by the need to land when the moon was full and the tide - because of the German underwater obstructions - was low. This meant there was only a small window of opportunity each month and that depended on the weather being reasonably benign during that period. Someone who had the ear of the planning committee must

have thought June was a reasonable bet for clement conditions. Consequently plans were made for the invasion to start on 5th June.

However, by the 4th it was clear the weather, which had been good throughout May, had deteriorated too much for the fleet to set sail. So the

new date of 6th June was chosen based on the meteorologist's forecast of a ridge of high pressure coming in from the south-east. As it happened - and it quite easily need not have done - the weather held and the biggest amphibious operation the world had ever seen began. But June still had a sting in its tail for on the 19th the worst storm for forty years hit the beachheads and raged for three days, destroying one of the two Mulberry harbours that had been towed across the Channel on D-Day. Luckily for the Allied forces, the other artificial harbour survived and that, combined with the Americans increasing the amount of supplies they took to the beaches in their DUKW amphibious vehicles, prevented the assault from collapse. Nevertheless, in the words of the Duke of Wellington, it was a close run thing. Of course, the Duke was talking about the victory over the French at Waterloo in 1815 but it does have something in common with D-Day in that it was fought in June (the 18th to be precise). So whether it is in war or peace, June can be a bit of a bitch: hot and steamy one moment; cold and unpredictable the next, and for no apparent reason. I wonder what she has in store for us this year?